

A SOCIOLOGICAL SEARCHING OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG EDUCATION FACULTY IN INDIA - A STUDY

L. NAGARAJ

*M. A. (Sociology), B. Ed., M. C. J.,
Department of Sociology, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana State-500007*

Abstract

Education is often seen by many as a means to overcome the challenges faced by society by achieving greater equality. It is considered to be a domain which enables individuals to develop according to their unique needs and potential. Specifically, higher education is that sphere of education which is provided by universities, colleges, and other institutions that award academic degrees. Higher education also empower individuals to expand their knowledge and skill base, prepare for a successful career, all round personality development, abilities to grasp and understand abstract concepts and theories and also to express their thoughts clearly in speech and in writing. Society as a whole benefits as a result of education. If citizens of a country are better educated, the country will advance and progress more. Universities and Institutes of higher education perform an important role in fulfilling the goals of higher education and the wider society. In the present times the universities are under increasing pressure to respond to the new skills and demands generated by a rapidly changing and globalized market. They act as a middleware between industry and society by providing skilled and qualified manpower resource that can also be efficient work force. Therefore, the institutes of higher learning are required to respond to the process of innovation and adapt their organization and pedagogies to cater to the needs of diversified groups of students and industry. The key roles of autonomy within a university and an institution of higher learning are played by the teaching faculties.

Keywords: *Sociological Searching, work-life balance and education faculty.*

Introduction

The faculties today are increasingly realizing that knowledge dissemination of the traditional pattern would not fetch much competitive outcomes. So, they are required to design curriculum by focusing on innovation and the teaching methods are also required to be improved so that all the students are benefitted. Within this shifting process the faculties are under pressure to balance the multifarious demands of teaching, research and administrative duties. People join organizations in their capacities to satisfy their economic, social and psychological needs. Work is a highly social activity. Within an organization an employee has to adhere to the prescribed roles which they are ought to fulfil. The social interaction that takes place in the workplace and a good quality of work life of any organization has an important role to play to improve an employee's working situations, their skills, values, attitudes and performance at large. All these create an impact on quality of work life that is mostly based on their personal work experience. Almost all faculty members teaching at different universities, in the course of their career, finds difficulty in achieving balance between academic and personal life irrespective of family status. In the absence of a clear boundary, academic work has often been all pervasive. Sometimes it affects family life, leisure time and other activities. However, academia provides the faculties the opportunity of a flexible schedule which can help to achieve the balance. Employees today try to constantly juggle their professional and personal lives and it often results in interference or influence of one on the other which leads to positive or negative 'spill-over'.

The main objectives that this paper aims at accomplishing are as follows:

- To have a conceptual understanding of the issue of work life balance among education faculties in higher education sector

- To understand the significance of work life balance for an employee's and organizations overall development and its need to study in the Indian context

To begin with, a review of the secondary literatures is taken into consideration for the questions raised as the main objectives of the paper. The paper then proceeds to the discussion of the arguments that are raised on the basis of the reviews. Finally, the paper concludes with scope for future research.

Discussion

Competing demands of work and home and the multiples roles and responsibilities entrusted on individuals today has made it increasingly relevant for employees and organizations to discuss on the issue of work-life balance in recent years. Work overload, role conflict has generated stress among teachers which is leading to unfair work-life situation. This has necessitated the need to study work-life balance issues among the teachers. Proper work life balance can be achieved when an individual is able to fulfil all his/her needs in respect of family, work and society (Irfan et al. 2015). Strain or stress is the result of a disturbance in the equilibrium between the demands that employees are exposed to and the resources that they have at their disposal (Hakanen et al., 2006). Historically, many things have influenced and shaped the nature of work and occupations held by people. Technology is one of those things that exert an influence on the kinds of tasks that are performed and how they are organized. Technological advancement has changed work patterns by expanding the boundaries of economic, social and cultural relationships, a process known as globalization. Various studies across the world have supported the existence of stress among teachers at all levels from primary to higher education. Borg and Riding (1991) in their study among Maltese primary schoolteachers revealed that the level of stress among teachers, job satisfaction and career commitment was different in some of the teacher demographic subgroups. Results also showed that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with their job and less committed to choose a teaching career were they to start life over again. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) investigated the incidence of stress along with its sources and symptoms among 257 schoolteachers in 16 medium-sized, mixed comprehensive schools in England and about one-fifth of the teachers were either very stressful or extremely stressful. Khan et al. (2014) identified factors such as performance evaluation system based on typical confidential reporting as stressful among university teachers in Pakistan. Bhatti et al. (2011) observed a significant negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among university teachers in Pakistan. Reddy and Poornima (2012) study from 9 state universities in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh revealed experiences of moderate and high levels of occupational stress and professional burnout. Ahsan et al. (2009) study in Malaysia concluded that there was an inverse relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. It is assumed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person's satisfaction in their work and personal family life's roles which affects other family members as well (Broers, 2005). Sometimes, in order to strike a balance between work and family roles, women had to opt for part time employment. The role of part-time employment in the balancing of women's employment and family lives has generated an immense literature within the social sciences (Warren, 2004). Organizational work practices sometimes influence organisational and employee's performance. Beauregard and Henry (2009) analysed the literature to identify the various ways in which organizational work-life practices may influence organizational performance. They provided some evidence for the claim regarding recruitment practices that attract better applicants and reduce work-life conflict among existing employees in order to enhance organizational performance, but there is insufficient evidence to support the notion that work-life practices boost performance by reducing work-life conflict. Ahmad (1996) performed correlational and path analytic associations among conflict between work and family, job satisfaction, family satisfaction and life satisfaction among married professional Malaysian women and found that work-family conflict was significantly related to job satisfaction and to life satisfaction, although the correlation coefficients were very low. Work-family conflict was not related to family satisfaction; however, life satisfaction was related to job satisfaction and to family satisfaction. Lee and Hong (2005) analysed six aspects of work-family conflict that is time-based, strain based, and behaviour-based of work-influence-family and family-influence-work conflict on 112 full time lecturers/teachers teaching in eight private educational institutions in Kuching, Malaysia. They found that the lecturers/teachers experienced moderate levels of work family conflict. Burnout and stress exists among the teachers which if not given adequate attention can reduce employee's efficiency and organizational performance. Kalimo and Hakanen (2000) conducted a study in Finland where they have found out that; educators have the highest burnout levels when they are compared to workers in all other human services and white collar jobs. Hakanen et al., (2006) has used the Job Demand-Resource model which stresses that there are two parallel processes involved in work-related well-being among teachers, one of which was the energetically process and the other one is motivational process where in the energetical process, job demands predict health

problems through burnout and in the second process, job resources were related to organization commitment through work engagement. All these studies indicate the existence of stress and the problem of balancing work and life among the teaching faculties and it necessitates managing paid work along with those activities that are important to an individual's life such as family, community services, personal development, leisure and recreation. Scholars and researchers today are exploring the issue of balancing between work and family. In order to balance both, women and men have developed various ways to navigate the spheres of work and family. As Hertz's (1986) study revealed, contemporary dual-career marriage challenges the traditional ideal marriage. "Work and its rewards still shape a couple's life chances; but instead of being a single career or job defining marital roles, there are two careers, qualifying each spouse as a breadwinner" (p. 31). Some people can achieve a satisfying and successful career, a happy marriage and fulfilling parenthood if they receive social support, family support and work support (Broers, 2005). Organizations today are also increasingly pressured to implement work practices which can facilitate employees' efforts to fulfil both their employment related and their personal responsibilities.

Employees today try to constantly juggle their professional and personal lives and it often results in interference or influence of one on the other which leads to positive or negative 'spill-over'. Spill-over refers to a process where experiences encountered by individuals in one role influences the other roles. This spill-over can be positive or negative. Positive spill-over refers to fact that satisfaction and achievement in one domain may bring along satisfaction and achievement in another domain. Negative spill-over refers to the fact that difficulties and depression in one domain may bring along the same emotion in another domain (Xu, 2009). Edwards and Rothbard (2000) suggested that the spill-over of values, skills, and behaviours learned in one role might influence other roles. The teaching faculties experience this this spill-over effect when their work roles gets carried in their family roles and it can influence the experience of an individual.

Literature review suggests that the demands between work and family needs to be addressed and universities need to adopt 'family friendly policies'. Various colleges and universities in America are increasingly focusing on making their institutions family-friendly places for faculty to work enabling employees to balance and integrate the demands of the workplace with the demands of personal or family life (Smith and Waltman, 2006). Work/family issue will continue to be problematic unless there occur a change in societal norms that infuse these values.

Theoretical evidence also supports the issue of work life balance among individuals. According to Frederick Herzberg (1987), in motivation-hygiene theory discussed that individuals are not gratified with the satisfaction of lower-order needs at work such as those associated with minimum salary levels or safe and pleasant working environment rather, individuals look for the gratification of higher-level psychological needs having to do with accomplishment, appreciation, responsibility, advancement as well as the nature of the work itself. Herzberg's (1987) motivation hygiene theory of job satisfaction offered a rationale as to why employees may be more dynamic, creative, and committed to their employer when they work in an environment that promotes job satisfaction. Administrators must recognize and attend to both sets of characteristics and not assume that an increase in satisfaction leads to decrease in dissatisfaction.

Conclusion

This study is a sociological searching on the issue of work-life balance among the education faculties in higher education sector. In the Indian context, this issue needs to be explored in much detail. This study provides an understanding of issues which are significant for the teaching community at large. Interaction on the part of administrative authorities and teachers needs to be enhanced so that these issues can be resolved and a balance needs to be achieved between academic work load, leisure and extra-curricular activities for overall development.

References

- Ahmad, Amina (1996). Work-family conflict among married professional women in Malaysia. *The Journal of Social Psychology*. 136(5), 663-665.
- Ahsan, Nilufar; Abdullah, Zaini; Fie, David Yong Gun, Alam, Syed Shah. 2009. 'A Study of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among University Staff in Malaysia: Empirical Study', *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(1): 121-131.
- Beauregard, T. Alexandra and Henry, Lesley C. (2009) Making the link between work-life balance practices and organizational performance. *Human resource management review*, 19 . pp. 9-22. ISSN 1053-4822

- Begas, Samson B. 2012. *Quality of Work Life: Its Relationship to Faculty Productivity in Higher Education Institutions in Capiz*. International Research Conference for Globalization and Sustainability, August 14-16, 2012, Sarabia Manor Hotel, Iloilo City Phillipine.

